

Appendix | Assessing corporate biodiversity performance: worked examples

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This appendix to 'Assessing corporate biodiversity performance' provides two worked examples to illustrate how the normative biodiversity metric (NBM) change assessment can be applied in practise.

Example 1: Mines Inc.

Mines Inc is a large multi-national mining company. They buy land with high mineral deposits to site their mines, which tend to be in remote wilderness locations with high biodiversity. The mined areas destroy all biodiversity at the site, and also require access roads to be constructed often through pristine areas. After the mine is exhausted, Mines Inc commits to restoring the mined area to a natural state and selling the land back to the local government, although in practise this takes many years and complete restoration is rarely achieved.

In recent years when Mines Inc have opened a new mine they have also funded a small biodiversity offsetting project in recognition of the growing importance of CSR. However the area of the offsetting projects have typically been less than the area of the habitat destroyed, and the offset projects have rarely involved the creation of any new habitat, only the notional protection or sometimes the incremental improvement of existing habitat in an area close to the mining project.

A selection of these offsetting projects are publicised on the website of Mines Inc as demonstrating a commitment to a 'no net loss' biodiversity strategy. However, Mines Inc do not publish any quantitative data on the overall impact of the activities of Mines Inc on biodiversity or the cumulative consequences of their activities.

In Table 1 the NBM change methodology is applied to assess the positive or negative impact on biodiversity caused by the company.

	Area	Land Meta-Class Status at 01.01.2010 (or date of purchase)	Status at 31.12.2010 (or date of sale)	Change in Status	Change by area metric	Weighted average change metric
Land patch A – new mine	60Ha	4	0	-4	-240 (60 * -4)	
Land patch B – new mine	140Ha	5	0	-5	-700 (140 * -5)	
Land patch C – biodiversity offsetting project in – improvement of habitat	30Ha	3	4	1	30 (30 * 1)	
Land patch D – reclamation of closed mine – gradual habitat improvement	50Ha	2	3	1	50 (50 * 1)	
Land with no change	200Ha	4	4	0	0 (4 * 0)	-
Total land owned/weighted Average	480Ha	-	-	-	-860	-1.79

Table 1: Mines Inc NBM change assessment

Using the NBM change assessment, it is possible to assess the biodiversity performance of Mines Inc looking beyond the positive publicity generated by the biodiversity offsetting projects. A score of -1.79 indicates a large negative impact on biodiversity; the offset projects of Mines Inc are not in any way equivalent to the degradation of habitat caused by new mining operations; to achieve their ‘no net loss’ objective far more habitat restoration or biodiversity offsetting should be carried out.

Example 2: Car Parks Ltd

Car Parks Ltd own and operate car parks throughout the UK. The policy of the company is to acquire degraded brownfield sites in the centre of towns which are unused and convert them into car parks.

The car parks which Car Parks Ltd builds are largely artificial surfaces with no biodiversity value, although they only build on land which was already degraded. The policy of the company is to build in strips of grassland with trees and flowers transecting the car parks, making the car parks more visually attractive and providing shade for cars.

The trees and flowers provide some small areas of habitat for urban adapted species of birds and insects.

	Area	Land Meta-Class Status at 01.01.2010 (or date of purchase)	Status at 31.12.2010 (or date of sale)	Change in Status	Change by area metric	Weighted average change metric
Land patch A – grassland near to car park site converted to car park	0.5Ha	1	0	-1	-0.5 (0.5 * -1)	
Land patch B – expansion of forested area around the headquarters of the head office	0.5Ha	1	2	1	0.5 (0.5 * 1)	
Land patch C – new car parks built on unused urban land	12Ha	0	0	0	0 (12 * 0)	-
Land patch D – grassland/tree borders put in new car parks	0.5Ha	0	2	2	1 (0.5 * 2)	
car parks with no change	35Ha	0	0	0	0 (35 * 0)	-
Total/Weighted Average	48.5Ha				1	0.02

Table 2: Car Parks Ltd NBM change assessment

From Table 2, we can see that although Car Parks Ltd does own large amounts of artificial surfaces and do not actively consider biodiversity impact, as a consequence of their construction policy they have a small positive impact on biodiversity, achieving a positive score of 0.02. Using the NBM change method we can demonstrate this positive impact which would otherwise go unnoticed.

These examples show how the NBM change methodology can be used to assess whether a business has a positive or negative impact on biodiversity, and verify ‘no net loss’ biodiversity policies.